4: West K-5 (1946) 1948 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[P. 56b]

313 of Nahuatzen, Sevina, and Cumachuén was almost completely stripped by the mills. Today in this area, barren, windswept sheep pastures, supporting occasional remnant clumps of pine, indicate the extent of forest destruction (pl. 8). Throughout the Sierra there is probably not a piece of virgin timber, so long and thorough has been lumber exploitation.

HANDICRAFTS

438 Among most people lacking modern transporta-
472 tion facilities and mass production techniques, cottage industries, often termed "native crafts,"
463 are characteristic of the local economy. Owing to the presence of particular raw materials nearby and/or to traditional skills, people of one village often tend to specialize in one or more crafts. Cottage industry and village specialization are prevalent in most of indigenous and even mestizo Mexico. It is and has been particularly so among the Tarascans, whom the early Spanish chroniclers described as a skilled and clever people (Beaumont, 1874, vol. 2, p. 165). Moreover, progressive exhaustion of originally poor soils and population increase have forced many farmers of the Sierra to turn to crafts for additional income. Today five general handicrafts (ceramics, textiles, woodwork, leathercraft, and metalwork) are practiced and over 30 types of articles made among 54 Tarascan towns and *ranchos* (map 20). Only 10 Tarascan-speaking pueblos lack a cottage industry. In 26 pueblos at least 25 percent of the "working" population [133] practice various crafts. Some villages specialize in only one industry. For example, over 80 percent of the working population of Santa Fé de la Laguna make pottery; nine-tenths of that of Jarácuaro are hat makers. Moreover, many towns which carry on various handicrafts may concentrate on one. Thus, Tarecuaro is famed for agave fiber products, Pamatácuaro and neighboring *ranchos* for wooden spoons and bowls. In most pueblos more than one craft is practiced, and in a few as many as eight distinct products are made.

177 Like so many of his material culture elements,
463 the Tarascan's crafts represent a mixture of

[133] The "working" population in Tarascan towns is estimated by dividing the total population by 3.5. The Tarascan family averages about 5 persons, but often the wife devotes her spare time to cottage industry and is sometimes helped by the older children. Boys over 12 years old usually work in the fields as farmers or in the house at the father's trade.